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Future-Proofing a Career of Web Design

According to U.S. News, web designers/developers are ranked #3 in Best Technology Jobs. What makes it more desirable to me is that it ranks well below average in Stress Level of work environment and complexities of the job's responsibilities and very high in Flexibility of alternative working schedule and work life balance(U.S.News, n.d.). In order to future proof a career, one must do lots of research through all kinds of modern media, like books, magazines, newspapers, television and Internet, to perceive what are the major corporations within the industry, understand the newer developments and trends of the industry, and what approaches he/she must take to obtain a job in that field.

Nowadays, company websites have become an increasingly important opportunity to reach customers for small and large business alike. As a result, the web design services industry has experienced solid growth over the past five years (IBISWorld, n.d.). As a web designer, one must study and work diligently and become talented enough to conceptualize, design, present and execute modern, sophisticated digital design and web experiences (nvidia). He/she must master the knowledge and related web technologies, especially some design-level softwares, such as Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), javascript and more software packages.

Front End tech, a successful company located in San Jose, California, was founded in 1997. They focus on the usability and aesthetics of design. They create beautiful, compliant and highly functioning web sites (Front End Tech, n.d.). Another web design

company, Watson DG located in Los Angeles, established in 2005, specializes in innovative creative and outline development, driven by serious passion for what they do (Watson DG, n.d.). Webpage FX, located in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, is a leading web development agency which has over seventy smart and talented employees. They offer integrated web solutions for businesses around the world. With 270% growth in a 3 year period and more than 30 new employees hired, WebpageFX was honored with inclusion in the 2014 Inc. 5000 list of the fastest growing companies in America (Webpage FX, n.d.). Square Space, located in New York, with over five hundred employees, is a successful website creating and hosting company. It was founded in 2003 and launched in 2004 by Anthony Casalena while he studied at the University of Maryland. Since 2004, millions of websites have been created on the Square Space platform (Square Space, n.d.).

Razor Fish, also located in New York, is one of the world's largest interactive agencies. They provide web development, media planning and buying, technology and innovation, emerging media, analytics, mobile, advertising, creative, social influence and marketing platforms (razor fish, n.d.). In 2008, Razorfish won over 75 creative awards including 10 Webbys, 11 Interactive Media Awards, 16 WebAwards, 3 OMMAs, 2 ADDYs, and 3 Create Awards (Top Interactive Agencies, n.d.).

Razorfish was founded in 1995. They have the headquarter in New York with U.S. offices in New York, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Portland, Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Austin. In 2005–2007, it expanded overseas through acquisitions in London, Paris, Sydney, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Berlin, Frankfurt, Singapore and a joint venture in Tokyo (Top Interactive Agencies, n.d.).

Razorfish helps its clients navigate the unknown, drive change and transform business. clients including Delta Air Lines, McDonald's, Mercedes-Benz USA, Microsoft, Nike China, Unilever and Uniqlo (linkedin, n.d.). In 1994, two childhood friends Craig Kanarick and Jeff Dachis established Razrofish which was originally headquartered at Jeff's apartment in Alphabet City in Manhattan. A few months later, they moved in to an office at 580 Broadway with three other employees. Their first project was to build a website for the New York Botanical Garden, which was paid for by Time Warner's Time-Life Books division (Andysowards, n.d.). Now it has grown into a big company with more than 2,000 employees worldwide.

One of the major "players" is Daniel Bonner, the Global Chief Creative Officer who graduated from Cleveland College of Art and Design and Edinburgh College of Art (linkedin, n.d.) and was a key leader at AKQA, growing the business and working with a large number of the world's top 50 branches before he joined Razorfish in 2011 (razorfish, n.d.). Shannon Denton, another key "player," is the global Chief Executive officer who graduated from Texas Tech University with a bachelor's degree in computer science (linkedin, n.d.) and was the CEO of a digital consultancy for seven years prior to joining Razorfish (razorfish). William Lidstone is the Global Chief Marketing Officer of Razorfish who spent a decade working with Daniel Bonner as part of the leadership team at AKQA Prior to Razorfish (Crunchbase, n.d.). He joined Razorfish in 2011 as Executive Vice president. Since then his role has grown delivering ideas, technology and service design for the company's clients - Coca-Cola, Diageo, Ferrari, Flat, Heineken, McLaren Automotive, Nike, Unilever and Xbox (razorfish, n.d.). Ray Velez is the Global Chief Technology Officer who graduated from Boston University (linkedin, n.d.). He has

been in the industry for almost twenty years, previously at Cambridge technology Partners and Scient. His professional experience leads to his work with clients ranging from CitiBank to Ford Motor Company to the National Football League (razorfish, n.d.). Finally, Rishad Tobaccowala holds a dual role within Publicis Groupe, serving as both active Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer at Vivaki - a global leader in digital advertising solutions and the chair for leading digital agencies DigitasLBi and Razorfish (razorfish, n.d.).

"They (razorfish, n.d.) had the best and farthest-reaching idea of what travel retail could be anyone was talked to. They became less of an advertising agency and became more of a business-problem agency," Bob Kupbens, VP-marketing and digital commerce from Delta Airlines said (adage). Razor is one of the pioneers of marketing in the digital age that has a unique blend of technology, creativity and media at its core (glassdoor, n.d.). Those are the major keys to its success.

Web design is a ever-changing industry and let us see what the authorities predict its trends. Grid-based layouts, especially Pinterest-like cards layouts, are still very popular today. 2016 will see more playful web layouts that deviate from a rigid grid design (Creative Market, n.d.). According to the article written by larry Alton in the Huffington Post, these trends are: long scrolling sites, split screens, parallax scrolling, responsive web design, large visual headers, storytelling and hidden menus (Huffington Post, 2015). As a future web designer, one must have to stay in touch with the possible trends in the industry.

For me, I am interested in a job of working as a true web designer in the future. Web designers/developers "must take into account a client's products or services as well as its

target market to create a site that appeals to its customers or intended audience” (U.S. News - Money, n.d.). As a web designer, I will need knowledge of software programs, web applications and more programming languages. I need to receive a Bachelor's degree.

Before I transferred to California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB, n.d.), at the community colleges, I completed most of the required General Education courses and several classes related to the major - CSIS 77 Intro to Digital Media, Webpage Authoring HTML, Applied Networking and Basic Programming at Gavilan College and CIT 011 Intro to Computer Hardware and Software at Mission College in order to prepare myself for successful transferring. In the course CSIS 77, I learned to explore the use of computer-based tools in the design and production of digital media by creating and editing digital images, sounds, video, animation, and text (gavilan, n.d.). In the course Webpage Authoring, I learned to use HTML/XHTML to create web pages with text in various sizes and colors, links to other sites, background color or patterns, graphics, tables and mailto links (Gavilan College, n.d.). In the course Basic Programming, I learned an introduction to programming using BASIC and learning one computer language will generalize to other languages (Gavilan College, n.d.). In the course CIT 011, I learned the fundamentals of computer hardware and software and advanced concepts such as security, networking, mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones, client side virtualization, and the responsibilities of an IT professional (Mission College, n.d.).

Soon after I transferred to CSUMB, I started to work on all the coursework required in the undergraduate degree of my major Web Design. This semester I am

currently taking Japanese 102 Beginning Japanese II, CST 236 Computing for Digital Artists and CST 300 Major ProSeminar. In the course of CST 236, this course covers the fundamentals of how computers work in the creation of digital media for commercial entertainment and fine art purposes; including hardware components, operating principles, software basics, memory management, storage, programming basics for vector and bitmap functions, compression schemes and basic scripting (CSUMB, n.d.). In the course of CST 300, it provides an integrated overview of the computer science and communication design majors and their requirements. Students develop a plan for their learning goals (CSUMB, n.d.).

According to the Student-transfer Information System, CSIS 77 and Webpage Authoring HTML course credits earned can be respectively applied to CST 251 and CST 201 at CSUMB (assist.org, n.d.). For general education requirements, I still need one course from Life Science to complete. I plan to take ENVS 201 Intro to Environmental Science in Fall 2017. And also I will need one more foreign language course - Japanese 201 to meet the foreign language requirements at California State University. I will take this course next semester (Fall 2016).

I plan to complete my Bachelor's degree academic plan within five semesters in two years. Besides the three courses - Japanese 102 Beginning Japanese II, CST 236 Computing for Digital Artists and CST 300 Major ProSemina, mentioned above being taken this semester (Spring 2016), during Fall 2016 (next semester), I will take JAPN 201: Intermediate Japanese I, CST 227 Introduction to Digital Graphic Design, CST 221 Scripting for Multimedia and CST 351 Web Design. In Spring 2017, I will take CST 461S Comm Design Service Learning, CST 328 Digital Art and Design, CST CST 400

Capstone Project Planning and CST 496 Directed Study which needs to be taken twice, once concurrently with CST 400, and once with CST 401 which I will take in Fall 2017. In Fall 2017, I will take CST 352 Web Scripting, ENVS 201 and ENVS 201 Lab, CST 451 Web Production, CST 496 and CST 401.

In Spring 2018, I will take CST 373 Ethics in Comm and Tech and CST 363 Intro to Database Systems.

In the course CST 221, I will learn learn the fundamental concepts of web programming plus designing, coding, testing, debugging, and documenting of computer programs (CSUMB, n.d.). In the course CST 227 which is a project-based course, I will learn to combine the study of visual design and aesthetic principles while developing skills to produce digital graphic media. Students study historic design trends, typography, color theory, and production for cross-media production. Students apply the steps of the Design Process to create original vector and bitmapped imagery to solve visual communication design problems (CSUMB, n.d.). In the CST 328 course, I will learn how fundamental concepts of art and design apply to a broad range of commercial, expressive and entertainment forms. Students also study the democratization of the creative process through digital media, using current technology to produce sophisticated and expressive examples of personal digital creativity (CSUMB, n.d.). In the CST 401 course which is a laboratory course and that will support students during the creation of their Capstone projects and assessment for Capstone outcomes (CSUMB, n.d.). In the CST 461 S course which is a project-driven course in which advanced Communication Design students analyze and solve a design or technical problem for their community partners and their constituents. Students address social injustice issues and combine design and technical

skills with professional knowledge to solve the problem (CSUMB, n.d.). In CST 451 course, I will learn integration of current web technologies and techniques to produce a fully functional website for a client. Topics include Content Management Systems, Project Management, and Usability and Testing (CSUMB, n.d.). In CST 496 course, it provides a framework for a substantial research and development effort: ideation, proposal writing, project management, presentation, documentation, and/or evaluation. Provides one-on-one guidance on students' research and development effort within the School of Information Technology and Communications Design disciplines (CSUMB, n.d.).

Addition to the course taken above, I plan to participate in a Summer internship program at certain company to work on outside of school to prepare myself for finding employment. That will give me a good opportunity to to gain working experience and also may get more transferring skills so that I will make sure I obtain some working experience by the time I graduate. Through the internship, I will gain practical experience by applying what I learn in the classroom. Heather Huhman writes in her article, "Internship experiences provide a valuable opportunity to share your skills with a prosperous employer long before the hiring process for an entry-level job occurs This can be a great benefit when, in the future, an opening does occur -if you've impressed them, you'll probably be on the list of top candidates for the job" (Heather, 2011). The internship program will offer me a great opportunity to build a valuable networking contacts. That will help me meet new people and practice networking skills while establishing a network of professional contacts, mentors, and references (University of Iowa, n.d.).

Through these researching and the industry analysis, I have gained lots of information and have learned how to meet the requirements and pathways in order to earn a Bachelor's degree and successfully graduate. As a future web designer, I will keep learning new related technologies in this field, learn to balance a huge amount of information. To become a successful web designer with good characteristics, patience, organization and the ability to work independently and also work smoothly with co-workers and pursue the career as a successful web designer.

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